



## 2008 Military Spouse Appreciation Day

In 1969, a small group of wives and widows gathered around a kitchen table to voice concerns about inadequate support for military Families who had lost loved ones. In the true American spirit, they did not just talk; they took action, and formed the Military Wives Association.

Four decades later, we are a vastly different Army and our spouses have changed with us. As community leaders, careerists, mothers and fathers, and even Soldiers themselves, they routinely put the welfare of their Soldier, Family, and Nation above their own. As single parents, they sustain repeated deployments – even fifteen-month deployments. Many have lost husbands and wives whose ultimate sacrifice we must never forget.

The 500,000 military spouses of our All-Volunteer force are a national treasure – they are the Strength of the Nation. After almost seven years at war, our Active, Reserve, and National Guard spouses continue to, unconditionally, support America's Army. For all they do, we have a moral obligation to them. We are in their debt and owe Soldiers and their Families a quality of life commensurate with their quality of service. Nothing less is acceptable.

Last year, 300,000 Soldiers enlisted or reenlisted in the total Army. It is clear there are dedicated Americans, willing to serve their country in this era of persistent conflict. The reassurance and assistance you heroic spouses provide is essential for keeping our magnificent Soldiers with us – we are the best in the world at what we do, in large part, because of what you do.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, we salute you. Army Family Strong!

Kenneth O. Preston  
Sergeant Major of the Army

George W. Casey, Jr.  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

Pete Geren  
Secretary of the Army